

10 June 1968

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: CIA: The Director, Mr. Richard Helms
[redacted]

JCS: The Chairman, General Earle G. Wheeler
Lt. Gen. George S. Brown
Executive Col. D.P. McAuliffe

DIA: The Director, General Joseph Carroll
[redacted]

1. On the morning of 10 June, a meeting was held in General Wheeler's office to discuss the report prepared by CIA for the President on "North Vietnam's Ability to Withstand Manpower Attrition". The President had also requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff comment on this report.

2. The report was transmitted to the JCS for comments on 4 June. The JCS comment was a statement of nonconcurrence because of CIA use of enemy strength figures which were at odds with those held by MACV. This meeting was requested by Mr. Helms so that the CIA position and the need to use strength figures could be explained to the Chairman.

3. Mr. Helms opened the meeting by telling the Chairman that in accordance with the oral agreement reached on 3 May 1968, Mr. Helms was consulting with the Chairman before he made use of the CIA estimates of enemy strengths. Mr. Helms then asked [redacted] to state our case for using these strength figures. [redacted] outlined our general case briefly and the group then listened to a rebuttal from General Carroll. After a discussion of the merits of the argument, [redacted] proposed that the CIA draft be amended to exclude much of the details on strength figures but to include two fundamental estimates which were essential to the study. It was also agreed that notation would be carried that these estimates were higher than those of MACV because they were based on estimated techniques rather than order of battle procedures. These were the estimates of the strength of the total insurgency base and the estimate for the number of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam. General Wheeler accepted this proposal.

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4. On the basis of this agreement Mr. Helms said that CIA would proceed with the publication of the report. He also said that because of the sensitivity of the figures and the fact that CIA and DIA were working to resolve the disagreement, that the dissemination of the report would be very tightly controlled. It was agreed that on the basis of this agreement the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the report would be redrafted by General Carroll and would be included as an attachment to the report when it was transmitted to the President.

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Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

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DD/OER: [REDACTED] (22 Jul 68)

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